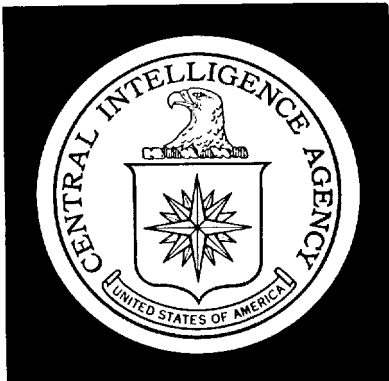


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DIRECTORATE OF  
INTELLIGENCE

# *WEEKLY SUMMARY*

## *Special Report*

*Albania Moving Out of Isolation*

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### ALBANIA MOVING OUT OF ISOLATION

Albania has recently adopted a more open and less defensive foreign policy. Jarred out of its haughty, largely self-imposed isolation by the impact of last year's Czechoslovak crisis, the Hoxha regime has reappraised its policies and, in marked contrast with the past, is taking the initiative to make new friends. At the same time, Tirana shows no sign of lessening its ties to Peking, or of deviating from its own view of what constitutes Marxist-Leninist ideology.

The magnitude of the change that has occurred can be best appreciated by viewing it against Albania's traditional xenophobia and paranoiac fear of foreign domination. For two decades, Tirana has balked at any notion that it had close ties or common interests with its Balkan neighbors. Moreover, the Hoxha regime's policies were animated by fierce hostility toward Titoist Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, not to mention its running polemics with the "imperialist" West.

With the exception of Albania's anti-Soviet stance, much of this quarrelsome attitude has been dropped. The antagonistic attitudes remain just beneath the surface, but, for now at least, Tirana is intent on minimizing its differences with a number of foreign adversaries. Just how long Albania's new diplomacy will last or how far it will go depends to a great extent on the duration of Soviet pressure for conformity in Eastern Europe and on the course of the Sino-Soviet dispute.

### BACKGROUND

The isolationist and nationalistic tenor that has generally pervaded the policy of the Albanian Workers (Communist) Party is a product not only of the country's long and turbulent history of successive invasions, foreign domination, and revolts, but also of the party's direct experience with Soviet and Yugoslav attempts to control Albania following World War II. During the last 24 years the chauvinistic excesses of the Hoxha regime have grown out of its fight to preserve Albanian independence—first from Yugoslav suzerainty and later from that of the Soviets. This fact more than any other explains the otherwise erratic and illogical course of Albania's foreign policy during the last two and a half decades.

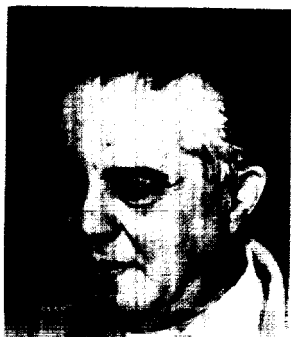
Tirana's search for an ideologically compatible "big brother" who could aid the country's backward economy and provide a shield against potential foreign aggressors (without himself posing a threat to the Hoxha regime's independence) made Tirana's ties to Peking from 1961 to August 1968 appear ideal. There were, however, problems in the alliance.

The Tirana-Peking axis has had and continues to have mutually exploitative aspects. As a result Tirana probably never has enjoyed Peking's complete confidence. Albania, for example,   is as much in the dark as the rest of the world as to what is going on in Communist China. The

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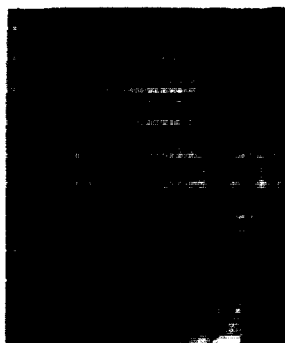
**ENVER HOXHA**, Albania's dogmatic 61-year-old party first secretary, has kept tight-fisted control over the country's internal and foreign policy since Albania's liberation in 1944. He is described as egotistical, intelligent, ruthless, and ambitious.

Cultural Revolution, with its fanatical Red Guards, caught the Hoxha regime by surprise. Furthermore, Albania apparently was informed only belatedly of the opening and subsequent proceedings of last April's Ninth Chinese Party Congress. From September 1967 to May 1969 the Chinese Communists had a large embassy in Tirana but no ambassador—hardly the way one treats a confidant. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Chinese aid has fallen short, both in terms of quality and quantity, of that formerly provided by Moscow. These problems notwithstanding, the knowledge that China has no territorial claims on Albania, and the fact the Chinese demand little more than political support in return for their assistance, more than offset the disadvantages of the Peking connection in the eyes of the Hoxha regime.

Peking remains Tirana's mentor and chief benefactor. Albanian propaganda has repeatedly hammered away at Soviet aggression along the Sino-Soviet border, accused Moscow of being in league with Washington to build a "ring of fire" around China, and extolled the virtues of the Maoist leadership. Peking, holding up its end of the bargain, agreed last November to increase its trade and aid to Albania considerably, although the details of this agreement have never been disclosed.

The invasion of Czechoslovakia however, was the catalyst for turning away from a too exclusive tie to Peking. No longer could Hoxha and company paper over the inherent disadvantages and weaknesses in the Sino-Albanian alliance. China was clearly in no position to offer meaningful military support in the event, however unlikely, that Albania came under heavy Soviet pressure. Tirana was forced to face up to the fact that it, too, had a stake in what happened to the two other independent-minded Balkan regimes—Romania and Yugoslavia—and that in the altered situation in Eastern Europe Albania's puritanical isolation could prove in the long run to be its undoing.



**MEHMET SHEHU**, Albania's 56-year-old premier, has built his career by reorganizing the country's internal security and secret police (Sigurimi). He is second only to Enver Hoxha in power and authority.

### THE NEW POLICY

The Hoxha regime's new policy in foreign affairs reflects lessons learned from the Czechoslovak crisis of a year ago, apprehensions about the territorial ambitions of the military government in Athens, and continued uncertainty regarding Soviet intentions in Eastern Europe. Given Albania's heretofore standoffish role in Balkan politics, Tirana's new flexibility and its muting of polemics with the majority of its Balkan neighbors seem to signal a decision to reverse directions, and to concentrate on this area. Already the ridicule and self-righteous indignation over the activities of governments outside the Balkans—sentiments that once pervaded Albanian

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statements—have mostly disappeared. Excluded from this softer treatment are the Warsaw Pact countries except Romania, the Soviet Union, Israel, and the US.

The most striking change has come in Yugoslav-Albanian relations. Tirana flirted with the idea of softening its anti-Yugoslav stance immediately after the invasion of Czechoslovakia. The first real evidence of a change appeared only last March, however, when the Yugoslav party congress, normally a perfect target for Tirana's venom, was allowed by Hoxha to pass without Albanian comment. The following month the Hoxha regime formalized its revised stance toward Yugoslavia. On 11 April, in an unprecedented move, the party daily Zeri i Popullit declared a cease-fire for the first time since 1948 in polemics with its archenemy, Titoist Yugoslavia. It stated in a lengthy editorial that the common threat Belgrade and Tirana faced from the Soviet Union outweighed past differences.

Since April, Belgrade and Tirana have moved even closer. Bilateral trade is expected to increase by 35 per cent this year, border contacts are marked by an uncommon degree of cooperation, Yugoslav tourists are visiting Albania for the first time in three years, and negotiations are currently under way to increase their number.

Since Tirana's estrangement from the rest of the Warsaw Pact nations in 1961, Romania has occupied a unique position in the Hoxha regime's thinking. Both sides have attempted to maintain correct if not good relations, which in recent months have shown marked signs of further improvement. The Hoxha regime has pointedly separated Bucharest from the rest of the Warsaw Pact powers in criticizing the invasion of Czechoslovakia. No mention of Romania has appeared in Albania's bitter attacks on the International Communist Conference. Tirana has given its support,

in principle, to Romania's independent stance vis-a-vis Moscow. President Nixon's warm Romanian reception was reported factually by the Albanian news media in contrast with Tirana's criticism of the Asian leg of the President's tour. Although Albania boycotted the Tenth Romanian Communist Party Congress as a gesture of disapproval of the presence of Soviet representatives in Bucharest, Tirana was unusually laudatory in congratulating Romania on its 25th National Liberation Anniversary last month.

Tirana is unveiling its new diplomacy gradually, without fanfare, and in a variety of ways. Since last December, the Hoxha regime has established diplomatic relations with six countries: Congo (Brazzaville), Kuwait, Southern Yemen, Syria, Sweden, and Zambia. In addition, an unusually large number of foreign trade union delegations attended Albania's May Day celebrations this year. Where it was formerly lacking, normal diplomatic courtesy is becoming part of Albania's state-to-state relations with a number of countries. Unusually cordial congratulatory telegrams were sent, for example, to the presidents of Austria, France, Italy, Turkey, and the UAR, as well as to the King of Morocco on the occasion of their countries' national holidays.

Albania's traditions are rooted in the Moslem world, and it is logical that, as Tirana begins to emerge from its shell, some of its first overtures should be toward the Middle East. Turkey, despite its membership in NATO, is playing a significant role in Tirana's new reckoning. Under a recently concluded agreement between the two countries, Albania is opening a consulate in Istanbul—its first anywhere—in exchange for a Turkish consulate in an Albanian city as yet unnamed. In mid-May, the president of the Albanian People's Assembly, Behar Shtylla, spent nearly ten days in Turkey, repaying the visit to Albania last September of Turkish parliamentary leader Feruh Bozbeyleli. During the past year, moreover, there have

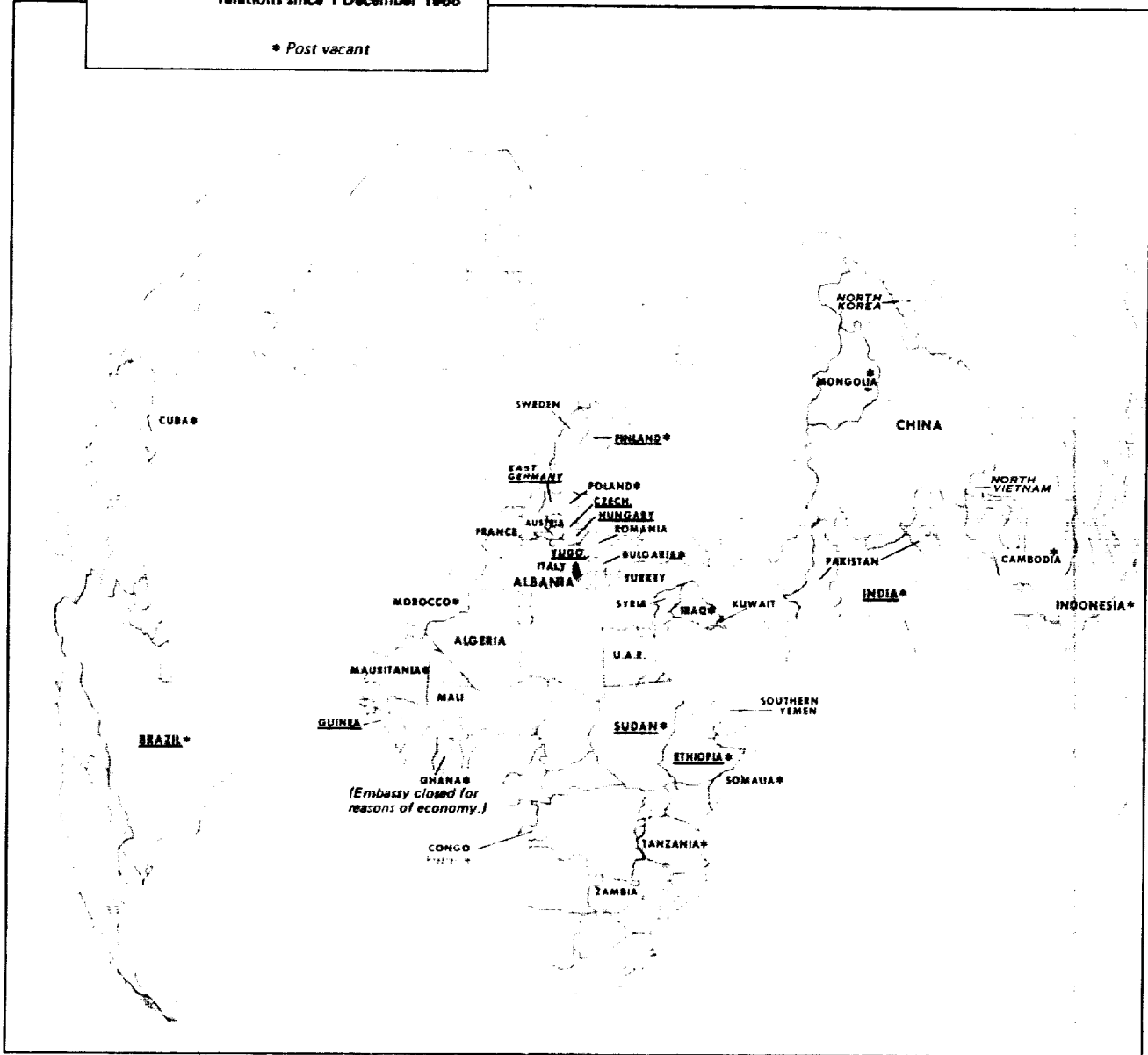
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## Albania's Diplomatic Relations

**FRANCE** Ambassadorial level  
**HUNGARY** Chargé or ministerial level  
**SWEDEN** Agreed to establish diplomatic relations since 1 December 1968

\* Post vacant



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BEHAR SHTYLLA, a career diplomat and newly appointed president of the People's Assembly, is one of the most cosmopolitan of Albania's leaders. A former minister to France and Italy, Shtylla also has been active in United Nations affairs. He speaks French, Italian, and English, and enjoys "high living,"—which makes him at ease in a wide variety of social and diplomatic gatherings.

been several low-level Turkish-Albanian exchanges.

Elsewhere in the Balkans, Bulgarian-Albanian relations have shown only a slight degree of improvement since their near rupture in mid-1968, although there was an agreement late last year to exchange "commercial counselors." Any improvement in Albanian-Greek relations, however, has been prevented by continued suspicion of the intentions of the military junta in Athens. These suspicions have been deepened by recent restatements of Greek claims to Northern Epirus (southern Albania). Tirana's new friendliness with Turkey may, in fact, be an outgrowth of its fears of Greece.

During the last half dozen years, a steady improvement in Albanian-Italian relations has been the major exception to Tirana's anti-Western bias. In the spring of 1964, the two countries agreed to raise the status of their respective diplomatic missions to the ambassadorial level, and Italy has continually shown an interest in investment opportunities in Albania. At present, [redacted]

[redacted] Tirana is looking for ways to increase its trade with Italy, and periodically rumors circulate that both sides are interested in opening a direct shipping link.

Tirana's new initiatives complement rather than contradict its ties to Peking. For example,

Albania's sudden appearance in Eastern Mediterranean diplomatic communities not only opens new doors to the Hoxha regime but also provides Albania with a forum from which to expound standard Sino-Albanian propaganda themes, such as pointing out Moscow's failure to prevent the swift Israeli victory in June 1967.

In retrospect, the groundwork for Albania's new policy was begun last January when Behar Shtylla replaced Adyl Kellezi as president of the People's Assembly. The Hoxha regime, preparing its foreign policy initiative, chose a career diplomat to fill the important post of assembly president. Shtylla, who has been in the Albanian foreign service since 1945, is a relatively young (51 years old) and forceful leader with all the right credentials. He joined the party a few months after its founding in late 1941 and fought in the resistance during World War II. He is well versed in the art of diplomacy and is a clever, forceful opportunist who can assume different roles. Shtylla's background is Western oriented. He has served as minister to Italy and France, and speaks Italian, French, and English. It appears to have been no accident then, that Shtylla led the Albanian parliamentary delegation to Turkey last May—the first high-level official Albanian delegation to a non-Communist country in eight years.

#### OUTLOOK

For the immediate future, party First Secretary Enver Hoxha and Premier Mehmet Shehu have committed Albania to a new diplomatic path. It is a cautious one, but Hoxha and company evidently believe it is the one that will best ensure the survival of their regime and of the brand of Marxism-Leninism they espouse. It is expected that Albania will continue to expand contacts and ties with a variety of countries.

At the same time, Hoxha will operate in such a way as to avoid giving any foreign country

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leverage for political influence on his government. The question of independence remains foremost in the minds of Albania's leaders, and the current pliancy in their policy merely demonstrates their willingness to use any means to avoid foreign domination.

Albania's new assertiveness is providing Tirana with a degree of diplomatic and political flexibility it has long lacked. A continuation of this policy will undoubtedly be welcomed by most of Albania's Balkan neighbors. Even a basic shift, such as a cautious resumption of informal contacts with the US, would cause no difficulties in Belgrade or Bucharest. Most Balkan regimes except Bulgaria's would be inclined to look upon any opening of Albania to the world (short of a warming in Soviet-Albanian relations), as a positive step that would augur well for their own

contacts with Tirana. They would equally welcome gradual steps for the establishment of US-Albanian relations.

Tirana can be expected to consolidate, exploit, and to some extent expand the gains made during the last year. Particular emphasis will undoubtedly be placed on the countries of the Middle East as well as the "third world." As long as the Hoxha regime feels menaced by the Kremlin, it will continue to step over the wall of differences with Yugoslavia. Recent regime pronouncements, including a speech on 12 July by Deputy Foreign Trade Minister Vasil Kati, indicate that a drive to increase trade with non-Communist countries may be the next step in Albania's political initiative. This course could bring the Albanians into wider contact with the developed West, possibly even the US.

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